Offices functioning in the State of Kerala during the last three years is as follows:

Passport Office	1996	1997	1998
Trivandrum	77,106	92,522	87,478
Cochin	84,710	1,05,615	1,10,120
Kozhikode	1,40,574	1,48,055	1,41,976

(c) The Passport Office in Trivandrum issued 82,838 passports during 1998 and the total number of pending applications at the end of the year was 7,331.

Japan's refusal to life curbs on Loan

993. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Japan has declined to lift curbs on loans to India during the course of recent official meeting at Tokyo between Indian Foreign Secretary and Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister;

(b) if so, what are the reasons thereof; and

(c) what are the details of topic discussed and decision arrived at during that meeting?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Immediately following our nuclear tests in May, 1998, the Japanese government announced that they would, *inter-alia* take the following measures. Freeze grant assistance and Yen loans for new projects except projects with a humanitarian purpose; and they would examine the loans extended to India by international financial institutions. No substantive change in this position was indicated in the course of the recent official talks held by Foreign Secretary in the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo from 17-21 January, 1999.

The discussions at the Foreign Secretary level talks covered different aspects of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. Both sides agreed to proceed with intergovernmental consultations including India-Japan Trade Talks, policy dialogue between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Indian government and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of the Government of Japan, the meeting of the India Japan Joint Commission on Science & Technology, as well as parliamentary and Cultural Exchanges.

Indo Sri Lanka Accord as free-trade

994. SHRI CO. POULOSE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of Indo-Sri Lanka accord on free-trade; and

(b) the details of the conditions attached of the proposed liberalisation of trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Accord

(a) and (b) The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement was signed on 28.12.98 during the visit of the Sri Lankan President to India, wherein both countries have agreed to progressively eliminate tariffs on bilateral trade. Tariffs are to be phased out in 3 years by India on imports front Sri Lanka and in 8 years by Sri Lanka on imports from India. Tariff concessions would not be available on the items to be specified in the 'Negative List'.

For being eligible for tariff concessions, the Domestic Value Added Content (DVA), should be at least 35% of F.O.B. value, If inputs from the other contracting party are used, the value of such inputs upto 10% can be set off against the 35%. Further, the product must have undergone a manufacturing process, and, after the process, be classified in a different 4 digit level, HS code (Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System), than those in which the non-originating materials used in the